

AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

~~An apparatus for gripping the~~ The teat of an animal ~~assisting is gripped to assist~~
in drawing milk therefrom. ~~The apparatus includes a~~ A housing and more than one
constricting element are arranged in the housing so that the constricting elements,
which are operable in both constricting and non-constricting modes, periodically
constrict the teat. ~~The apparatus further includes means for switching the~~ The
constricting elements are switched back and forth between non-constricting and
constricting modes. ~~The apparatus includes a~~ A controller ~~in communication with the~~
~~means for switching, which in accordance~~ with a predetermined timing and spatial
sequence controls ~~[[the]]~~ periodic switching of the constricting elements from
constricting to non-constricting modes and vice-versa. A milking claw, a suction
generating apparatus and a collection vessel for collecting the drawn milk may also be
provided. No sub-atmospheric pressure acts directly on the teats during the milking
cycle. ~~A system including such a gripping apparatus for drawing milk from the teat of an~~
~~animal is also taught. Similarly, a method for milking an animal which imitates hand~~
~~milking and does not employ a vacuum system is described.~~